

SLOW PITCH SOFTBALL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2021-2025

By 2025 softball will be a co-ed team sport of choice in Ireland. Softball will be recognised as both a leading provider of inclusive social, recreational sports opportunities which have been embraced by communities, the private and public sector, and for delivering professional high-performance competitive leagues embedded in every province. A popular burgeoning intersvarsity competition exists that continuously entices, engages and grows new life long participants. Inspirational performances and results of teams at a Euro and World level have forged a positive public reputation demanding regular media coverage profiling the game.

Softball Ireland will deliver Quality Accessible local Development Programmes supported by dedicated regional centres of excellence driving Individual and Team Passion to Play Ball

Quality Coaches and Umpires	Talent Development and Performance	Modified Game Formats	Facilities and Equipment	Marketing and Promotion	Player Retention Focus
<i>Professional coaching and umpiring will ensure quality player experiences</i>	<i>Teams will achieve on field excellence at club, regional and international levels</i>	<i>Multiple formats of the game will cater to diverse player needs</i>	<i>Dedicated and shared facilities access will exist through out Ireland enabling sustainable balanced growth</i>	<i>Public profile and recognition will drive participation, fan engagement and new investment partners</i>	<i>A sport for life – the softball experience will drive long term involvement</i>
Key Tasks Actions to be developed / delivered within each work stream to enable the vision to be achieved					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach and Umpire development pathway clearly outlined with qualifications and experience for progression along this pathway articulated and understood • Potential new coaching and umpire talent identified and supported • Coaches and umpires have access to a regular professional development opportunities • Coach and umpire mentoring programme developed and deployed • Coaching an Umpire recognition programme established. (awards and profiling) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent development pathway established with clear criteria for national selection into all squads and all High Performance campaigns • Regional centres of excellence formed and or appointed to provide regular open training and skill development sessions for players at all levels of the game • Regional and cross regional leagues established and or supported to drive competitive opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, package and introduce a new format of game for universities and create an inter-varsity league • Investigate the social sevens concept developed by Softball Australia and consider the benefits of introducing a new social league format based on its principles • Develop, package and introduce an appropriate format of the game for use by large commercial organisations and public sector social work teams • Consider the feasibility and the benefits of establishing a girls only introduction to softball sessions/packages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete a regional audit of all current and potential softball competition and training facilities identifying gaps in provision/access • Develop a proactive plan to strategically approach local facility providers to consider business case for better access and a national home of softball • Look into potential for shared facility/club training venues with other sporting codes. • Continue to resource and provide start up equipment kits available to support new clubs/teams. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverage pinnacle events like the World Championships and the Olympics to drive interest in softball • Establish incentive scheme to encourage “bring a pal to play” days. Eg create a sub s reduction for players who continuously introduce others to the game • Create and education a network of sport journalists about the game, tap into these journalists on a regular basis with news updates • Drive, vibrant social media content via face book , instagram and twitter with stories aimed at creating good engagement with clubs and players • Establish newsletter, which covers what’s happening and profiles new players coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a “welcome to softball” induction toolkit for use by clubs and coaches? Which provides checklist to make sure that new players/recruits are placed in the best team environment that suits their skills and background experience. • Provide clubs with simple guidelines for regular “pulse checks” with players to identify the good, the bad and the potential improvements that can lead to continued involvement • Work proactively with players to create transition pathways into on and off field leadership roles (coaching, umpires, admin) introduce the concept of buddy support system.

Development to be under pinned by exceptional governance and administration, highly capable professionally run clubs with robust administrative systems and income streams